A Conversation with the President
by Jack Curley and Phil Radoff

Seven months into his term of office, Brandeis President Ron Liebowitz sat down with us for a relaxed and pleasant conversation in which he talked about his academic career, the future of Brandeis, the role of lifelong learning at a great university, and Brandeis’s Jewish heritage.

Before arriving at Brandeis, President Liebowitz had spent his entire professional career at Middlebury College, first as a teacher of geography and Russian studies (interests he inherited from his Russian immigrant grandfather), and later as provost and finally as president. Named by TIME Magazine as “one of the ten best college presidents in the country,” he attributes much of his success to his undergraduate professors at Bucknell University and his mentors at Columbia University, economists Padma Desai and her husband, Jagdish Bhagwati, who introduced him to new ways of thinking about the world.

Among Liebowitz’s proudest accomplishments at Middlebury was the achievement of a long-held goal of carbon neutrality through the development of a biomass gasification plant and other “green” initiatives. In 2010 and again in 2015, at the suggestion of his wife, Jessica, he encouraged teams of Middlebury undergraduates, aided by faculty, to compete in the Solar Decathlon, the U.S. Department of Energy’s biennial competition to design, build, and operate attractive, energy-efficient solar-powered houses. The teams’ award-winning homes, which now house students, occupy an honored place on the Middlebury campus.

Liebowitz cites this effort as an example of student activism channeled into specific and productive goals, an outcome he would like to see repeated at Brandeis.

His belief that no one should remain in an academic leadership role for more than ten years led Liebowitz to step down from the Middlebury presidency in 2015. During a sabbatical year that included a move to Newton to settle in a predominantly Jewish community, Liebowitz was approached by the Brandeis search committee, accepted its offer, and was inaugurated as Brandeis’s ninth president on July 1, 2016.

To formulate his near-term objectives, Liebowitz consulted with large numbers of faculty, current and prospective students, alumni, staff, donors, and friends. He sought to ensure that the university’s financial and staffing capabilities match its mission. He also took an in-depth look at Brandeis’s reputation, seeking to clarify (Continued on page 8)
A Note from the Managing Editor

By Phil Radoff

With this issue, we welcome our new members to BOLLI, and we also say farewell to a departing staff member, Archivist Nancy Alimansky. Nancy is leaving The Banner in order to devote more time to her watercolors (and, incidentally, to preparation for her latest course offering). We will miss her sage counsel.

At the same time, we are pleased to welcome Ellen Moskowitz as Nancy’s replacement. Ellen is a relatively new BOLLI member, although husband and frequent SGL David is a well-known figure at 60 Turner. Ellen is a retired public school art teacher who enjoys monotype printmaking when she’s not taking courses at BOLLI. We look forward to Ellen’s participation on the staff.

Welcome, New Members!

We are pleased to welcome 51 new members from 23 cities and towns to our BOLLI community. We have 392 BOLLI members this term.

Arlington: Peter Braun
Ashland: Ralph Manning
Bedford: Nancy Kleinrock
Boston: Barnet Weinstein
Brookline: Gerard Badler, Bernice Boltax, Roberta Kozinn
Canton: Marvin Cohen, Linda Silverstein
Chestnut Hill: Richard Levinson, Phillis Walt, George Wharton
Concord: Nancy Brown, Paul Brown
Harvard: Bruce Nickerson, Frances Nickerson
Jamaica Plain: Irving Gates
Lexington: Peter Albin, Marvin Antonoff, Judy Dan, Esther Scharfman
Lincoln: Allison Easton
Needham: Mary Jo Hollender

Newton: Joseph Albeck, David Chosiad, Gayle Ehrlich, Ruth Kandel, Christine Kodis, Susan Messinger, Linda Ross, Saul Schapiro, Alice Soref, Harriet Theran
Quincy: Fay Strigler
Sharon: Devorah Meshoulam
S. Hamilton: William Thedford
Waltham: Shelley Drowns, Debra Guttormsen, Stephen Middlebrook, Carla Munsat, Ann Ross, Robert Storella
Wayland: Bruce Jordan, Daryl Mark, Richard Mirel, Judy Orloff
Wellesley: Dennis Greene
Weston: Dorothy Collier, Lilo Feinstein
Westwood: Barbara McAllister
Woburn: Margaret Witecki

The BOLLI BANNER is published by The Banner Committee: Phil Radoff, Managing Editor/Articles Co-Editor

Na’ama Ansell, Secretary
Sam Ansell, Cartoonist
Jack Curley, Articles Co-Editor

Ellen Moskowitz, Archivist
Sue Wurster, Production Editor

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March 2017
As some of you know, BOLLI has received a $25,000 grant from the Osher Foundation to enhance its financial wellbeing and enrich its educational and social program. Our good fortune began with a request for proposals (RFP) from the Foundation. Sent to all Osher Institutes with million dollar endowments, the RFP called on interested institutes to submit business plans designed to raise substantial philanthropic dollars to support their operating expenses. In September we received the award and by November the funds were disbursed. Brandeis’s Office of Research Administration is administering the grant. According to its terms we commit to raise $50,000 in business and corporate sponsorships, significantly increase member participation in annual giving, and expand our membership ranks by ten percent by April 15, 2018.

In this Director’s Corner, I’d like to explain what the influx of these new dollars would mean for BOLLI members, and how you can help contribute to the success of the plan.

First of all, BOLLI’s winter and summer graduate student-led lecture series require a sustaining financial resource, as does the regular staffing of fall and spring study groups with graduate students, each of whom receives a stipend of $750. In the course of the past two years, these lectures have brought us countless hours of stimulation and pleasure, bringing scholarship and teaching prowess in American history, classical music, and world literature. Our graduate instructors have infused our study group curriculum with their learning, bringing us courses in the history of climate change, Moby Dick, and Leonard Bernstein, among others, that we otherwise simply would not have enjoyed. These enhancements are relatively new to BOLLI and they have come to us courtesy of the generosity of a few special BOLLI donors. In order to secure them on a permanent basis, however, we need substantial and ongoing philanthropic investment. Successful execution of our business plan will bring the necessary investment to BOLLI to sustain these lectures and study groups for many years to come.

Our Osher grant also brings us closer to the day when BOLLI will be accessible to people regardless of their income or ability to drive. With the help of a regular and substantial stream of new gifts, I envision transporting people who cannot drive, and regularly providing bus travel for BOLLI special interest groups who want to travel together to their intended destination. Welcoming more people of limited means who want to immerse themselves in our intellectual and cultural milieu, transporting any member in need to our doors, and providing ample transportation for BOLLI cultural outings: this is a vision of BOLLI vitality redoubled, an expansion of our canopy beyond our current bounds, and a protection against the mobility challenges that might limit any one of us.

Growing revenue for our operating budget will also enable BOLLI to establish a technology help desk that will allow our members to cope with the dizzying pace of change in the digital environment into which all of us have been thrust. Many older Americans are on a collision course with educational and cultural lockout. Brandeis already offers us powerful educational resources, digital course platforms for example. Currently we refrain from using them for fear that the learning curve will be too steep, especially since we don’t have the necessary staff to train and support our members in their use. With a help desk of our very own, populated by skilled—and patient—Brandeis undergraduates, BOLLI would be able to provide every member with access and ongoing support for a big world of educational and cultural media. I also envision our desk being a resource for you as you discover new apps for your phone and iPad, and a destination for you as you uncover new ways to connect, communicate, and organize BOLLI life online. Online will never be a substitute for BOLLI’s face-to-face (Continued on Page 7)
Winter Seminars and Lecture Series

The Tempest by Naomi Schmidt

In January, a group of us met to discuss Shakespeare’s last play, The Tempest, under the guidance of Brandeis professor Billy Flesch. As in previous years, Flesch provided insights not only into the text of the play but also into the playwright’s craft.

The Tempest tells the story of how Prospero, the victim of political conniving, is exiled to an island with his daughter and how he uses his mastery of magic and illusion to restore his position as Duke of Milan. In this bittersweet tale, Prospero gives up his magical arts as he moves toward the end of his life, much as Shakespeare, with this final play, contemplated a farewell to the theater arts and left London to retire to Stratford.

No prior source has been found for the story of this play, which is unusual for Shakespeare but consistent with the view of the play as a personal statement, with Prospero standing in for the aging playwright himself. Shakespeare is able to use the perspective of an old person in creating his main character, whose tenderness is colored by crankiness and moodiness, without falsifying or idealizing him.

Mood is very important in The Tempest, as the play is episodic and fragmented in moving from one part of Prospero’s island to another, and it proceeds more by tone and by mood than by a tightly developed plot. The island is a magical place, and the magic of the play resides in its shifting moods, which proceed much like a musical tone poem from episode to episode.

There was discussion of whether Ariel, who is written as a genderless spirit, should be played by a man or by a woman. Even Prospero has been portrayed as a female “Prospera” in the film with Helen Mirren and in a recent production in Brookline that was seen by some class members. The conversation on this and other topics could have continued, but, as the time on the island had to come to an end, so had our time for discussion, obliging us to take our leave of Turner Street after this magical week.

Into the Enlightenment...
by Suzanne Art

Gil Harel treated an enthusiastic group of BOLLI music lovers to a lively journey into the world of great composers with his new course, Into the Enlightenment: A Survey of 18th Century Music. Focusing upon the Classical period and the transitional years linking it to Romanticism, Gil offered something for everyone. He carefully explained many of the basics of musical composition, such as the definition of sonata form and the differences among monophonic, homophonic, and polyphonic music, a reference to the number of “voices” heard at a time. He was also more than willing to
go into some of the finer technical details of music theory for the accomplished musicians in the group. The result was a rich experience for all.

Gil devoted each lecture to a few major composers, working his way from the Baroque music of J.S. Bach to the romantic features in the later works of Beethoven. Colorful biographical information enlivened the discussions. Bach emerged as a virtuoso organist and a pious Lutheran, composing complex contrapuntal music, not to please his audience (parishioners of the church where he was Kapellmeister) but to honor God. Fellow German George Frideric Handel, on the other hand, spent most of his time in London, creating operas, oratorios, and symphonic works for English audiences. The good luck of Haydn, who enjoyed the patronage of the wealthy Esterhazy family for most of his career, contrasted with the struggles of Mozart to find commissions. Perhaps most poignant was Beethoven’s heart-breaking battle to cope with his deafness.

Although college textbooks refer to 1750, the year of Bach’s death, as the beginning of the Classical period, Gil explained how composers of the early to mid-18th century wrote music that had features of both Baroque and Classical music. Hasse, for example, composed music known as galant, which, unlike the complexity of Baroque music, had a simpler base line supporting a simple harmony. By the second half of the 18th century, Vienna had become the epicenter of music. The city’s superstars were Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Haydn and Mozart marked the heyday of Classical music. The balance and symmetry of their works reflect that love of order and logic associated with the contemporary philosophical and literary movement, known as The Enlightenment. But Beethoven had other ideas. His later works, filled with passion and emotion, marked the beginnings of a new kind of music known as Romanticism.

At the end of the class, Gil announced his intention to teach a course on the Romantics in June, much to the delight of everyone present.

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**Beethoven Revisited**

*by Barbara Apstein*

Many of us remember hearing Chuck Berry and the Beatles sing “Roll Over, Beethoven” back in the 1950s and ‘60s. For many BOLLI members, however, it’s clear that Beethoven never did roll over; his music has remained a powerful and enriching presence in their lives. *Musical Genius at the Crossroads: Beethoven Revisited,* a winter lecture series offered by Charles Stratford, Ph.D. candidate in musicology and Presidential Fellow at Brandeis, was attended by a large and enthusiastic group of BOLLI members. Mr. Stratford explored Beethoven’s biography, musical style, performance history, and critical reception.

In the first of three sessions, Stratford presented the musical world in which Beethoven was educated, discussing the origins of the classical style and stressing its qualities of balance and clarity. He outlined the structure of sonata form, demonstrating with examples from Haydn and Mozart, and showed how Beethoven built on the work of these mentors while moving in new directions.

The second lecture focused on the emergence of Beethoven’s “heroic” period, with an analysis of the Third Symphony (“Eroica”) and the “Tempest” Piano Sonata (Opus 31, No. 2). The “Eroica,” Mr. Stratford explained, initially dedicated to
Napoleon, was shaped by Beethoven’s feelings of alienation, the political currents of his time, and the heroic ideal.

The third session was devoted to a detailed examination of two of Beethoven’s last works, the Piano Sonata No. 32 (Opus 111) and the String Quartet No. 16 (Opus 135). To illustrate the theme and variations format, which Beethoven uses for the sonata’s second movement, Mr. Stratford first played a recording of a simpler example of the form, Mozart’s variations on “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.” He then guided his listeners through Beethoven’s far more complex, dramatic, and innovative treatment of the sonata’s “arietta” theme, tracing what he referred to as “a journey of thoughts and emotions” ending in “a place of surrender, being at peace.” The course ended with the lovely slow movement of the quartet, Beethoven’s last, completed only a few months before his death in 1827.

Participants in Stratford’s first BOLLI lecture series responded enthusiastically to his insights and to the power of Beethoven’s music.

The Essential Kafka
by Barbara Apstein

Franz Kafka is one of the few writers whose name is commonly used as an adjective. “Kafkaesque” has come to denote a certain kind of unsettling experience, a bizarre and disorienting situation where the individual feels powerless to control what is happening. Under the genial guidance of Steve Dowden, Brandeis Professor of German Language and Literature, a group of BOLLI members plunged into Kafka’s surreal world during a series of lectures titled The Essential Kafka held during February break.

Professor Dowden began by examining two brief parables, “Prometheus” and “The Top,” which Max Brod, Kafka’s friend, recovered from his desk after the author’s untimely death from tuberculosis at age 43. In clear and simple language, the texts touch on philosophical issues that are central to Kafka’s novels and stories: questions about the nature of understanding and explorations of the relation between language and human experience.

Turning to the novel, The Trial, Professor Dowden guided his listeners through the opening pages, emphasizing the importance of the characters’ gestures and body language. In his view, the “trial” that gives the novel its title is a metaphor for Josef K’s (the principal character’s) conscience, his unacknowledged sense of guilt. In the opening sentence, the reader learns that Josef K has been arrested. Even though he has not “done anything wrong,” K is revealed as a mediocre human being, a dull, mid-level bureaucrat. He has no meaningful human relationships; he is an outsider who has never experienced life fully. In Professor Dowden’s view, the characters whom K encounters are outward projections of his inner self. Because the court which is judging him is in fact his conscience, it never appears; it only sends out a series of emissaries.

In addition to analyzing the texts, Dowden helped to situate Kafka in his historical and literary milieu. A Jew living in Prague during the early years of the 20th century, Kafka belonged to the artistic movement that rejected Victorian traditions and
sought a stripped-down, elemental means of expression. For a parallel in the world of music, the professor played “Six Bagatelles” by Anton Webern, who was a student of Arnold Schoeberg’s atonal music. Webern’s spare atonal work is a far cry from the late Romantic style, with melody in the usual sense and ornamentation being jarringly absent. Visual artists like Kandinsky, painting during the same period, provide another parallel; turning to abstraction, they argued that paintings don’t need to be “about” anything and instead focused on the essentials of color, shape, and form.

All three sessions included a great deal of lively conversation. Prof. Dowden clearly enjoyed discussing the many questions and comments posed by BOLLI members.

How can you help? Our friends at the Foundation have challenged us to increase member participation in annual giving. They urge us to say to our potential corporate sponsors, “BOLLI members are deeply moved by the vision of what is unfolding at BOLLI, and they support it. You should as well.” With the credibility that comes from widespread member support, BOLLI will indeed be ready to seek significant dollars from new corporate friends.

We have the ability to secure the future of our extraordinary graduate student initiatives and make transformative gains in transportation, financial aid access, and technology education and support. The Osher Foundation has provided the means and endorsed the goals: it’s up to us to seize the opportunity.
A Conversation with the President, Continued

and reinforce the fundamental importance of its Jewish roots and values, particularly the continued importance of those values to the university’s diversity goals. Liebowitz points to Jewish values fostering education, critical thinking, social justice, and openness to all faiths and beliefs as Brandeis hallmarks that need to be firmly and unambiguously explained and repeated to alumni and other constituent communities. He would also like to see Brandeis take greater advantage of the numerous cultural and educational opportunities afforded by the Greater Boston area.

Liebowitz was acutely aware of the consternation within the university’s foreign student and faculty population caused by the recent issuance of restrictive immigration orders. He noted that the university has been instrumental in assuring that those in need of support and counsel are put in touch with campus services, alumni, and others offering assistance.

When the discussion turned to BOLLI and to lifelong learning in general, Liebowitz emphasized the view that adult education is in great demand. He added that, based on his experience at Middlebury, “the blending of generations on campus is a great idea,” and said that he would “love it to be a more significant piece of campus life” at Brandeis. BOLLI members will have the opportunity to hear Liebowitz expound on these thoughts at a “Lunch and Learn” talk on March 9, titled *Looking Back and Looking Forward: Brandeis University after 68 Years*, an opportunity that should not be missed.

Upcoming Campus Events: Music, Theater, Art

Compiled by Ellen Moskowitz (Photos Online)

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<td><strong>TRIBUTE TO IRVING FINE</strong> - Slosberg Center, Sunday, March 5, 3 p.m.</td>
<td>This year’s tribute concert will feature special guest artists, Zéphyros Winds (free).</td>
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<td><strong>LYDIAN STRING QUARTET</strong> - Slosberg Center, Saturday, March 25, 8 p.m., $15 (preconcert talk at 7 p.m.)</td>
<td>The program includes: Haydn - Quartet in D major, Op. 64, No. 5 “Lark”; a world premiere new work by Jon Nelson; Steven Snowden - Appalachian Polaroids; and Brahms - Quintet in G major, Op. 111 with guest violist Amadi Azikwe. (Free Sneak Peek at Mandel Center - Wednesday, March 22, Noon)</td>
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<td><strong>LEVELING UP</strong> - Laurie Theater (Spingold Theater Center), March 9 - 12, $15</td>
<td>Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. Deborah Zoe Laufer’s play, directed by Robert Walsh, focuses on three 20-something roommates who are glued to their video games.</td>
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<td><strong>KNIZNICK GALLERY (Women's Studies Research Center)</strong>, March 20 - June 16</td>
<td>Tuesday, March 21 at 5 p.m., introduction by the artist with reception at 6 p.m. Helène Aylon - <em>Afterword: for the Children</em> Internationally acclaimed Jewish feminist artist, Helène Aylon, presents the conclusion to her 20-year series highlighting the dismissal of women in Jewish traditions and text.</td>
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